

Swine flu hits Germany, WHO calls emergency review

April 29 2009, By PATRICK McGROARTY , Associated Press Writer



A South Korean quarantine officer, left, checks the temperature of Japanese passenger against the possible infection of the swine flu at Incheon International Airport in Incheon, west of Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, April 29, 2009. Five more South Koreans were being tested for possible swine flu after traveling to Mexico or the U.S., officials said Wednesday, a day after announcing the Asian nation's first probable case. (AP Photo/Yonhap, Lee Jung-hun)

(AP) -- Germany confirmed three cases of swine flu on Wednesday, becoming the third European country hit by the disease that has upended life in Mexico. New Zealand's swine flu total rose to 14 and the World Health Organization called for an immediate scientific review of the disease.

Germany's national disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said the three cases include a 22-year-old woman hospitalized in

Hamburg; a man in his late 30s being treated at a hospital in Regensburg, north of Munich, and a 37-year-old woman from another southern town. All three had recently returned from Mexico.

Britain and Spain already have confirmed cases of the disease.

[Swine flu](#) is suspected of killing more than 150 people in Mexico and sickening over 2,400 there. WHO has confirmed 105 cases in seven countries, not yet including Germany. Over half of those are in the United States, but Mexico is the only country where deaths have been confirmed.

In Geneva, the U.N. health body was holding an emergency "scientific review" of the swine [flu outbreak](#) Wednesday to collect what is known about how the disease spreads, how it affects human health and how it can be treated.

Experts will take part via telephone from the United States, Mexico and other countries where people have been infected. A report will be published shortly after the meeting ends.

New Zealand's number of cases rose to 14 Wednesday, including one person not among a school group who recently returned from Mexico. Officials say the swine [flu strain](#) infecting the students is the same as that in Mexico. All were responding well to treatment with antiviral drugs and in voluntary quarantine at home.

New Zealand has 44 other possible cases, with tests under way.

Mexico was taking drastic measures to fight the outbreak. It closed all archaeological sites Tuesday and allowed restaurants in the capital to only serve take-out food in an aggressive bid to stop gatherings where the virus can spread. Schools remained closed until at least May 6.

A regional Beach Soccer championship in Mexico was postponed and all Mexican first-division football games this weekend will be played behind closed doors.

Other countries have reacted by avoiding Mexico. While the U.S., the European Union, and other countries have discouraged nonessential travel to Mexico, Cuba banned flights to and from Mexico and Argentina suspended flights arriving from Mexico.

Cruise lines are avoiding Mexican ports and holiday tour groups are canceling holiday charter flights there.

In Australia, officials were testing more than 100 people with [flu](#) symptoms for the virus. It has been ruled out in at least 10 cases.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio Wednesday that the government had granted health authorities wider powers to contain contagious diseases as a precaution.

Those powers ranged from "using disinfectants on planes or at ports through to the far more extreme ... making sure that people are isolated and perhaps detained if they don't cooperate and are showing symptoms of this disease," she said.

The World Health Organization has raised its alert level to 4 - out of a possible 6 - but has not called for travel restrictions or border closures.

No cases of the disease have been confirmed in Asia, where governments were rushing to try to hold back the virus from the continent and taking strict precautions with travelers at airports.

Associated Press Writers Ray Lilley in New Zealand, Rohan Sullivan in Sydney and Jae-soon Chang in Seoul, South Korea contributed to this report.

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Swine flu hits Germany, WHO calls emergency review (2009, April 29) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-04-swine-flu-germany-emergency.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--